



In this edition, Marco Boscolo and Jennifer Thompson explore their relationships with Nature. PRH Education provides them—and you—with tools to better understand, enjoy, and express the unique importance nature in each life.

Nature Growing in Me

by Marco Boscolo in Rome, Italy

Ever since I was a child, I have been fascinated by Nature. As a shy boy, I stood in horror as older boys enjoyed hurting lizards and frogs. As a teenager, I loved science. In college, I studied forestry. I went on to get a PhD in forest resources economics. For 20 years, now, I have worked as a professional in international development and conservation. These are my reflections on my evolving relationship with Nature.

I took the PRH workshop, *Who Am I?*, in 1996. One of the questions led me to explore my strong emotional reactions, and the reaction that stood out from the others was a memory of documentaries I had watched as a kid. I experienced true anger and outrage when I saw puppy seals being butchered for their fur. Their innocence and beauty were so endearing, and their sudden deaths so incomprehensible to me. How could anyone, any person, do that? There was rage in me, because I viewed Nature as innocent and defenseless.

I reflected on that memory for weeks after the workshop. Strange as it may sound, I experienced the puppy seals as beings I loved, almost as if they were aspects of myself. Was my way of caring for Nature another way of

caring for myself and for other “little ones”? I was seeing Nature as a child at the mercy of needy parents - parents not capable of seeing in their child anything more than a means to fulfill their own needs. They couldn’t see the miracle. I asked myself, “Who will protect Nature?”

That workshop, and my subsequent inner inquiries, rekindled my youthful connection with nature. Unexpectedly, something had started to heal inside me. A new appreciation for my father began to emerge, even though I had thought of him as having little influence in my life. My father was a Nature lover -- He never spoke a word about it, but I sensed that he was more at peace while in Nature, hiking in the forest, rowing a boat across the lake, watching birds and trees. Compassion and gratitude for my love of Nature, I now realized, was a gift from him to me.



I started to feel less angry at the way people treated Nature, and more hopeful. I began to realize that I saw the beauty, mystery, inspiration, and love of a virgin forest in many places: in my wife’s smiles and playful eyes, in the government officials I met in my travels, and even in the loggers wanting to harvest the forests. Nature was living in me and in those around me.

Gradually, my relationship with Nature shifted from a mission to protect it, to a strong desire to live *like* Nature. The vitality of Nature spoke to me of forgiveness, of infinite hope, and of abundant unconditional giving – whereas

(continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

protecting Nature spoke instead of fear and loss. It was as if Nature wanted me to join her in her mission: to never hold back, to always plant life, to never give up, and to be myself. In my heart, I was coming home.

The central attitude of my work today is my faith in the fundamental goodness of people and in the goodness of the Earth. Rather than the object of my protection, Nature has become the source of my inspiration, my teacher. It whispers to me, "Be like me. Be faithful to the beauty of your being." ❖

Find more info and class schedules at
www.prh-usa.org

Summer, a "Time for Being"

by Paula Evitts, PRH Educator, Great Falls MT

Nature is showing her beauty all around us. Let yourself be drawn into the wonders of this season:

- What new life is stirring in your depths as the Earth comes to life?
- What new qualities of your being are calling for attention?
- What relationships awaken new aspects of your self?

Choose the question that attracts you now. "Splash out" what you are experiencing in a creative expression (using colors, lines and shapes).

When you finish, ask yourself: What does my piece say about me today? What sensation is alive in me as I look at what I created? ❖

Walking the Continental Divide

*by Jennifer Thompson,
PRH Educator, Helena
MT*

During my three and a half weeks walking through Montana on the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) with my friends Becky and Paul last September, we became a community. We shared the goal of completing 225 miles of the CDT. We worked each day to find a flat place to put up the tarp, scout for water sources, and don rain gear just in time for the daily rain, sleet, snow or hail. In this pattern of walking, making and breaking camp was an inner cycle of reading my body and asking what I can and cannot do at this stage of my life. I was attentive to the arthritis in my foot and the weight of my pack on my back. Consistent checking in with my body was a necessity as I became more attentive to the interrelationship between my outer and inner environment.

Walking in the world of nature for twenty-six consecutive days gave me an intimate glimpse into plant-animal-weather community. I heard sounds of rockslides, bugling Elk, wolves howling as the quarter moon rose, and my eyes



delighted in an expansive view across seven mountain ranges. As Fall slowly crept in, I was surprised to find that gentian leaves become purple like their summer flower, and grouse whortleberry leaves turn lime-green. I experienced a growing sense of privilege as we hiked ten miles a day, living intimately in this Earth community.

The animal kingdom expresses many qualities of being. I learned from the efficiency and intelligence of the squirrel as he threw pine cones from tree tops. I responded to the sensuality of the elk's call and his ability to blend in with the environment. I observed how the bear carried herself with self-assurance and nonchalance. The plants gave their plethora of seeds and berries, amid the gorgeous dying leaves. Relaxing into these cycles of living, growing and dying, helped me to soften towards myself, accept the vagaries of my inner life and open in reverence to the world around me.

When I returned to my daily life in Helena, I felt protective of my "one sacred life". I experienced "ecology of beingness on Earth" as I walked through the plant-animal-weather community with my CDT partners. My "time for being" with the Earth was a blessing from which I am still growing and learning. ❖